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THE TOWN-HALL

(HOTEL DE VILLE)

OF

BRUSSELS.

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1903

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THE

TOWN-HALL

(HOTEL DE VILLE)

OF

BRUSSELS

Hôtel de ville

BRUSSELS
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The Town-Hall

of Brussels

The Town-Hall of Brussels, originally a house of Aldermen, was first built in 1300, at the corner of the Grand'Place and the rue de l'Étuve. It was rebuilt in a somptuous manner in the XVth century in the pointed arch style and embellished with its magnificent tower.

By the addition of the Hall, built in 1353 along the street since called the rue de l'Amigo, the whole building formes a square bounded by the Grand'-Place, the rue de l'Étuve, the rue de l'Amigo and the rue de la Tête-d'Or; the hinder portion was rebuilt in 1706, after the bombardement of the city by Marshal Villeroi, in 1695.

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THE oldest part of the building, commenced in 1402, extends from the rue de l'Étuve, to and including the tower.

In 1444, a new wing, extending to the rue de la Tête-d'Or, was added to the structure built at the commencement of that century.

The whole of the hinder part of the Town-Hall, as well that which extends along the rue de l'Amigo and that which runs along the rue de la Tête-d'Or, and the wing in which the grand stair-case is, was rebuildt in 1706 and the following years, in the style of the period. The rooms on this floor and which were formerly used by the States of Brabant, were furnished by them in 1710 and following years.

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I

Ground floor landing

CARTOON of Brussels tapestry representing the beheading of Saint-Paul, by Bernard Van Orley (1471-1541), offered by Mr. Leon Cardon, at the occasion of the artistic manifestation in honour to Mr. Ch. Buls, Burgomaster (1898).

Beside the keeper's lodging, picture by Stallaert, representing the death of Evrard T' Serclaes, Alderman of Brussels (1388).

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II

First floor landing

PORTRAITS of Sovereigns and their General Governors, in the chronological order, namely :

1° Charles II, King of Spain (1698), painted by Jean Van Orley ;

2° Charles VI, Emperor of Germany (1708), by Siger-Jacques Van Helmont;

3° The Empress Mary-Theresa (1740-1780), by Doffy;

4° The Empress Mary-Theresa, on horseback, by J. Millé ;

5° The Prince Charles of Lorraine, General Governor of the Netherlands (1744-1780), by Stalpaert ;

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6° The Emperor François II (1780-1790), by Herreyns ;

7° The Archduke Albert of Saxe-Theschen, General Governor of the Netherlands (1781-1792), by Le Clère ;

8° The Archduchess Mary-Christine of Austria, wife of Archduke Albert (1781-1792), by Le Clère ;

9° The Emperor François II (1792-1794), by Lens ;

10° Bonaparte, First Consul (year XII, 1804), by Charles Meynier ;

11° William the Ist, King of the Netherlands (1818), by Joseph Paelinck.

— Moreover on the right side, a picture representing the Superintendent and collectors of the canal, inspecting the lock at Petit-Willebroeck (about 1700) ; on the left side, near the stair-case, two pictures by Victor-Honoré Janssens :

1° Allegory connected with the events of the year 1708 ;

2° The young Duke Godefroid III in the battle of Ransbeek in 1143.

Middle the first floor are two vases painted by

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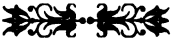
Adolphe De Mol, representing the « Picture » and the « Music ».

At the far end, a bust of the Emperor Charles the Fifth.



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III

The City-Council Chamber

THIS room and those adjoining were furnished from designs by Victor-Honoré Janssens, in the years just previous to the inauguration, in 1718, of Charles VI, Emperor of Austria, as Duke of Brabant.

The ceiling, also by Janssens, represents the Meeting of the Gods.

The tapestries, of which Janssens gave the design, were made in Brussels by Urbain Leyniers and Henri Reydams.

They represent :

1° The inauguration of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, as Duke of Brabant, in 1430 ;

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2° The abdication of Charles-Quint (1555) ;
3° The inauguration of Charles VI (1718).

Some allegorical pictures, representing the chief towns of Brabant ornament the piers between the windows. They are of a little later date than the rest of the room.

Some of the mirrors are also of this period.

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IV

The Maximilian Room

OVER the chimney may be seen a picture by Cluysenaer, representing the profil and buste of Maximilian of Austria and his wife Mary of Burgundy (1477-1482).

Two altar pieces of the end of the XVe century, by a Brussels artist.

The Brussels tapestries form part of a set called *The Life of Clovis*, designed by Charles Lebrun, painter to Louis XIV. They were executed by the Vanderborghts.

The subjects are :

1° The marriage of Clovis ;

2° The wedding feast of Clovis ;

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3° The baptism of Clovis ;
4° Clovis dictating his will.

Table centre piece in plated bronze executed in 1891 from the models by the sculptor M. Vanderstappen. The groups recall the two brussels legends in which women arc engaged : The Ladies Watch and The Women of the lower city beating the soldiers of Lambert Balderic, count of Louvain. On the top, Saint-Michael, patron of the city, victor of the demon.

Candelabra in plated bronze, by the same, with figures symbolising the Trades, whose Corporations were the cradle of the Commune (1891).

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[illegible]

BRUSSELS [illegible]
Clovis

5° Clotilde [illegible] been
6° The messenger [illegible] pain-
hand. [illegible] the city
[illegible] during

The part [illegible]
moveable panne[illegible]
up against the [illegible] the *Recollets*-
It was prevent[illegible]
during two [illegible] ont-de-la-Carpe ;
kept its primit[illegible] from the street

[illegible] taken from a house

[illegible] ridge, called *Manne-*

[illegible] and of the *Bear* tavern ;

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VI

Gallery leading to the Burgomaster's Room

THIS gallery was decorated in about 1718. The following portraits painted by Grangé, may be seen :

Charles-Quint (1500-1555);
Philip le Beau (1482-1506);
Philip IV (1621-1666);
Albert and Isabella (1598-1621, 1598-1633);
Charles II (1666-1700);
Philip II (1555-1598).

The arabesks and other pictures are by Dominique Allard.

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VII

The Antichamber of the Burgomaster

JEAN-BAPTISTE Van Moer's pictures have been placed in this antichamber. They were painted in 1875 and represent the parts of the city which were pulled down and transformed during improvement of the river Senne.

They are :

1° The Butter-Market, called the *Recollets-Market ;*

2° The draining-wells of the Pont-de-la-Carpe ;

3° Branch of the Senne, taken from the street called *Plattensteen ;*

4° Branch of the river, view taken from a house in the rue des Chartreux ;

5° The Basked-Makers Bridge, called *Mannebrugge ;*

6° View of the Senne and of the *Bear* tavern ;

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7° Ancient Brewery of the Recollets and the Vaelbeek ;

8° Sluice gate of the ancient fortifications ;

9° Mill of the Borgval, called *Banmolen ;*

10° Mill called of the *Beard* or *Baertmolen*, rue de la Petite-Ile ;

11° Paper-Mill or *Driesmolen*, rue des Six-Jetons ;

12° Branch of the Senne at the Borgval, view taken from the rue des Pierres ;

13° Branch of the Senne, rue Saint-Géry, and mill called *Ruysschemolen ;*

14° The Senne, rue des Teinturiers ;

15° Mill called *Ezelsmolen* or *Mill of the Donkey*, near the church of Our Lady of Succour (Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours).

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VIII

Gothic Hall

THIS hall was built after designs by M. Jamaer, the architect to the City Council.

The tapestries designed by M. Geets were executed in Mes[rs] Bracquenié's factories, Malines (1875 to 1881).

They represent the principal Trades of Brussels, and the « Serments » or Guilds, each symbolised by one of their membres :

1° Guild of Masons ;

2° » Brewers ;

3° » Tapestry Makers ;

4° » Painters ;

5° » Goldsmiths ;

6° » Embroiderers ;

7° The « Serment » of the Fencers and the « Grand-Serment » ;

8° The « Serment » of the Musketeers and that of the Bowmen.

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The serments constituted the militia of citizens, the army of the commons.

This hall is also decorated with bronze statues, representing the following former magistrates of Brussels, namely :

Gérard Pipenpoy (1421),
Guillaume Rongman (1424),
Walter Van den Noot (1456),
Jean Van der Meeren (1477),
Guillaume Estor (1477),
Nicolas Van den Heetvelde (1477),
Philippe de Witthem (1500),
Guillaume T'Serclaes (1488),
Nicolas Swaef (1386),
Thierry Van den Heetvelde (1387),
Nicolas de Saint-Géry (1407),
Jean d'Enghien (1456).

The bronze statue of Saint-Michael, patron of the City, may be seen at one of the far ends. It was chased by M. Vanderstappen.

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IX

The Hall of Marriages

At the end of the hall is a large allegorical picture, painted by Cardon in 1881 ; it represents the joys of marriage, presided over by the City of Brussels with this inscription :

Hier bindt de liefde U bly te gader.
(*Here may love bind you joyfully together.*)

Behind the chair of the Officer Registrar of Marriages, one sees an embroidery of stuff appliquee by M. and Mme de Rudder.

Two feminine figures symbolise Love and Law uniting the husbands, and above a crown of children alludes to the hopes of marriage.

In the compartments of the ceiling are painted the arms of the ancient trades ; the brackets supporting the beams of the ceiling bear the shields of the duchy of Brabant, of the City, and of the seven patrician families of Brussels.

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On the opposite side to the picture, one remarks eight wooden statues, carved by Geerts, at Louvain, and representing celebrities of Brussels of the xvth century : Jean Van Huffel, the foundator of the hospital des Bons Enfants ; Jacques Van Thienen, who built the ancient wing of the Town-Hall about 1402 ; Roger Vander Weyden, painter of the City, died in 1464 ; Pierre Van der Heyden, named A Thymo, first pensionneer of the City in 1433 ; René De Wael, teacher and litterary writer, died about 1460 ; the physician Jean De Wesele, one of the ancestors of the great Vesalius ; Henry Van Pede, architect of the City about 1525 ; Bernard Van Orley, painter, died in 1542.

On the ceiling cross of this hall are reproduced the following verses, wich once were inscribed in one of the rooms of the City-Hall :

Die eene stadt wel willen regeren
Sy sullen dese selve poincten hanteren.

Eendrachtich zyn met trouwen,
Ende gemeynen oirbaer aanschouwen.

De stadt bevelen den vroeden,
't Gemeyn goet nauwe hoeden.

Ende keerent ter meesten baten,
Te vriende houden die ondersaten.

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Haer vryheyt niet te laten breken
Om gemeenen oirbaer dickmael spreken.

't Recht houden altyts gelycke,
Alzoe wel den armen als den rycken.

Vaste houden hare statuyten,
Die quade altoes werpen buyte.

Getrouwe te zyn hare heere,
Dit is der ouder wyser leere.

The lighting apparatus represents the protector of the City, the Archangel Saint-Michael, by de Rudder.

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X

The Stair-Case of Lions

On the landing, at the top of the stair-case : two large pictures by Emile Wauters, painted the first in 1877, and the second in 1878. The one represents the Duke Jean IV bestowing on the 11th of February 1421, the nomination of two burgomasters; the other the Duchess Mary of Burgundy promissing solemnly on the 4th of June 1477, to observe the customs, and to maintain the privileges of the City of Brussels.

The stair-case is decorated with statues, the work of the sculptor De Groot. The one which decorates the mauclair of the entrance door of the Gothic Hall, represents the city of Brussels. Those in

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albaster recall to memory the following Patricians of Brussels of the XIIIth and XIVth century :

1° René Cluting, of the family of the foundators of the ancient hospital of Terarken ;

2° Walter Van den Bisdomme, who killed the Count of Luxemburg in the battle of Woeringen, 1289, action which is represented on the bracket supporting this statue ;

3° Arnoul d'Yssche, who carried in this same battle the standard of Brussels ;

4° Roger de Leefdael, castellain of Brussels, protector of sciences ;

5° Guillaume Pipenpoy, a famous warrior of the XIVth century ;

6° Jean de Releghem, who brought on the action in the battle of Bastweiler, 1370.

But as the portraits of these patriciens do not exist, the artist has given them the features of the following modern persons :

1° M. De Mot, Alderman, 1881 ;
2° M. André, Alderman, 1881 ;
3° M. Doucet, Counsellor, 1877 ;
4° M. Buls, Burgomaster, 1881 ;
5° M. Walravens, Alderman, 1881-1891 ;
6° M. Godefroy, Counsellor, 1863.

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The arms in the windows, and also those in the adjacent rooms, are taken from the coats of arms of the ancient burgomasters of Brussels, from 1421 to 1555.

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XI

The Grand Stair-Case

THIS stair-case has been entirely rebuilt under the direction of M. Jamaer, architect to the City Council.

It is also decorated with pictures executed in 1893 by Count Jacques de Lalaing.

The subject given to the artist was *the Glorification of Communal Power.*

We will indicate the subjects of the different pannels by the gilt inscriptions they bear :

1° *A Peste, Fame et Bello.*
Libera nos Maria Pacis.
(From plague, famine and war,
Mary of Peace, deliver us.)

The artist has borrowed this invocation from the ancient « Maison du Roi », which carried it

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on its front, before its restoration, and has symbolised all the powers of the city united to defend the belfry of the « Commune » against plague, famine and war.

2° *Pro Aris et Focis.* (For home and altar.)

The defenders of the Commune victors of their enemy, the feodal knight.

3° *Urbi et Orbi.* (To the city and the world.)

From the top of the steps of the Town-Hall, a magistrate proclames the bye-laws to maintain order and security in the City. This publication gives them force of law and from this moment every citizen is obliged to respect and to obey them.

On the ceiling. Portraits :

4° Everard T'Serclaes, murdered in 1387 whilst defending the rights of the City against the Lord of Gaesbeek, symbolises active and warlike energy ;

5° Jean de Locquenghien, to whom Brussels owes the digging of the canal of Willebroeck, opened in 1561, symbolises practical and foreseing energy ;

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